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For Immediate Release; July 19, 2007
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Waltham Eatery Fire Ruled Accidental

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Waltham Fire Chief Richard Cardillo announced that the July 15 fire at 470 Main Street, Waltham started in the basement of the Sal's Restaurant. The area of origin was underneath the take-out counter. Investigators believe the most probable cause was either an electrical malfunction or a natural gas leak, which could have been ignited by several possible sources in the basement. The damage at the point of origin makes it impossible for further forensic testing to rule out one or the other possible ignition scenario. The investigative team has found no evidence to suggest the fire was intentionally set.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Waltham Fire Department, the Waltham Police Department, State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF). The BATF assists our local investigative teams whenever a commercial business is destroyed by fire.

Chief Cardillo said, "I want to thank the Waltham and mutual aid firefighters for their efforts in fighting this fire. Two Waltham firefighters were hurt when the floor collapsed right into the basement where the fire started. Fortunately they were quickly rescued and their injuries minor."

Cardillo added, "I also want to thank Mayor McCarthy for her support and concern for our firefighters and her leadership in helping the community recover from this fire."

Waltham Mayor Jeannette McCarthy said, "This fire was a tragedy that has impacted two of the vital small businesses on Main Street. The fire brought out the best in our firefighters, our Emergency 9-1-1 operators, our public works employees and the folks at American Medical Response who supported our efforts."